

C. Remarks

The claims are 1, 7-12, and 18-22 with claims 1 and 12 being independent.

Claims 1 and 12 have been amended to clarify the invention. More specifically, each of the independent claims has been amended to make it more clear that it is the judging step or judging means which judges based on image data to be printed. These amendments are fully supported by the application as filed; accordingly, no new matter has been added.

Reconsideration of the present claims is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 7-9, 12 and 18-20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Takahashi (JP 04-033470) in view of Takahashi (U.S. Patent No. 6,330,050). Claims 10, 11, 21 and 22 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Takahashi (JP 04-033470) in view of Takahashi (U.S. Patent No. 6,330,050) and further in view of Applicants' described prior. Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections.

As noted by the Examiner, Takahashi '470 does not disclose or suggest judging as to which printing condition the printing means should perform printing according to based on image data to be printed. On the other hand, Takahashi '050 discloses performing tonality processing according to mode which includes a text mode and a photo mode. However, Takahashi '050 does not disclose how these modes are determined. Because of this, Takahashi '050 fails to teach or suggest at least one key feature of the present invention: judging as to which printing condition the printing means should perform printing according to.

Furthermore, Takahashi '470 discloses correcting image density. More specifically, in Takahashi '470, a density correction amount is changed according to the

type of printing medium. In contrast, the present invention addresses problematic density characteristic changes due to variation of a printing condition which is determined based on image data. More specifically, according to the present invention, density correction data is retained correspondingly to each of a plurality of printing conditions, and the correction is performed using the correction data that corresponds to the printing condition which is determined by the judgment based on the image data to be printed.

Any combination of Takahashi '470 and Takahashi '050 would merely suggest that either a text mode or a photo mode can be selected, that tonality processing is performed according to the selected mode, and that the density correction is differentiated according to the type of printing medium. What is more, neither of Takahashi '470 and Takahashi '050 discloses or suggests that the printing conditions include printing conditions which differ from each other in dot sizes which are formed in printing performed by the printing means and that the printing means forms the dot of size corresponding to the printing condition, in accordance with the image data.

Applicants' described prior art does not remedy the deficiencies of both Takahashi references. In fact, it is cited by the Examiner merely for its disclosure related to the printing of a test pattern. Applicants' described prior art does not disclose or suggest judgement of a printing condition on the basis of image data to be printed.

For at least the above reasons, Applicants submit that none of the cited references, whether considered alone or in any combination, render the present invention obvious. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the §103 rejections.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, favorable reconsideration and passage to issue of the present application is respectfully requested.

Should the Examiner believe that issues remain outstanding, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Applicants' undersigned attorney in an effort to resolve such issues and advance the case to issue.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our New York office by telephone at (212) 218-2100. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

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